

"BP" DESIGN PERFIN ON 1957 SCOUT STAMPS Rosemary Smith.

Bulletins 263/10-11; 279/14-15; 280/10.

In Bulletin 263 Dave Hill brought to our attention the three different dies of "BP & Scroll": each value of the 1957 Scout Jamboree stamps showing one of the three dies. At that time ('93) Dave was asking for information.

Nothing more came to my attention until the end of 1995 when member IAN BURNS' letter appeared in Bulletin 279 saying that these stamps were on sale from Avon Stamps. That Bulletin article carried the information that Ian had written to The British Philatelic Bulletin, in whose Sept '95 magazine Avon Stamps were advertising the BP & Scroll perfins (and the same advert was again in the Oct'95 issue), and to Avon Stamps themselves.

Both letters stated that enquiries had been made with Scout Headquarters and British Petroleum and as nothing was known in either archive, the stamps should be regarded as bogus.

In Bulletin 280 I published the letter from JOHN MATHEWS, who had also made his own enquiries in Australia, as there appeared to be some link down under.

Dave Hill has shown me a letter dated 6-10-95 from Leslie 'J. Buddie, M.B.E., one time Secretary to Greater London N.W. Scouts, to the Editor of The British Philatelic Bulletin. This too states that there is no foundation whatsoever to link these stamps to either the Scouts or British Petroleum. Dave thinks the matter should now be dropped as "least said the better". I do not agree and think that if nothing more is said, there is more likelihood of collectors not being aware of the forgery and will buy copies thinking they are genuine perfins.

I have had another letter from Ian Burns with copies of all the correspondence mentioned in previous Bulletins. He also enclosed copies of pages 21-23 from the SOSSI Journal, Jan/Feb 1996. (Scouts On Stamps Society International?) The following is from these pages.

"The Journal received an article from David Jefferies about perfins and new opinions on the newly (?) discovered B-P perfins on the 1957 Jubilee Jamboree set."

Article by David Jefferies

"Perfins were invented by Joseph Sloper and applied to British postage stamps in 1868. Incidentally the first U.S. perfin was applied in 1908 by the B.F. Cummins Company of Chicago.

Sloper's firm lasted until the late eighties when it was taken over by a company at Reading, England, dealing in computerised check writing technology. Some of Sloper's perforating machines were taken over but others were sold to private buyers, and this is where the problem starts.

The early British perfins (Scout associated) were used from the early twenties to the early fifties. They were supplied to those members of Imperial Headquarters, The Boy Scouts Association, whose duties took them away from the office and who had to deal with correspondence and submit reports. The most notable was Baden-Powell, the Chief Scout, Headquarters Commissioners, the Camp Chief at Gilwell Park (the International Training Centre near London) and Travelling Commissioners (an early type of Field Commissioners) were also involved. Perfins were also used to send out Scouter Warrants in cardboard rolls, possibly by overworked staff who had to take work home with them!

The Boy Scouts Association stopped using perfins in the early fifties but the Sutton Coldfield World Jamboree stamps were not issued until 1957. The 1957 Scout Stamps with the three types of B-P perfin and a scroll resembling those on some British Scout badges, were not used at Imperial Headquarters. Furthermore those surviving senior members of the staff to whom I have spoken have no knowledge of any approach (1957) trying to sell perfins to the Association.

The perfins on 1957 Scout stamps first appeared in 1993 and I suspect that they were produced on one of the Sloper machines sold privately. There is no doubt to me that they are bogus and I urge all Scout Stamp collectors not to waste their money on them."

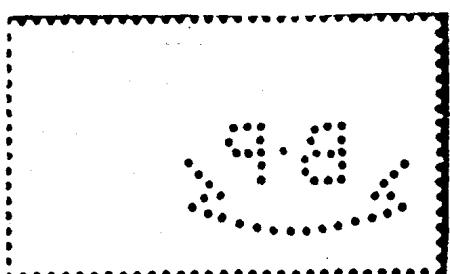
"David Jefferies is a former Vice President of our society. He served as Executive Commissioner for Scotland with the Scout Association of the United Kingdom until his retirement. He holds the post of Secretary of the Association of the Scottish Philatelic Societies and Curator of Forgeries for The Scottish Philatelic Society."

Ian Burns gave a photocopy of John Mathews' notes in the Feb '96 issue of our Bulletin to David Jefferies for his comments. His response was to the effect that even the British Petroleum idea could also be a false lead. Ian and David Jefferies are both quite friendly with Tom Rielly from Edinburgh. Tom has just retired from a senior position in ICI and he has been in contact with the BP Archivist who can find no trace of their ever sponsoring any perfins of the types mentioned. Thus it seems more and more likely that David Jefferies is correct and the perfins are completely fake, designed to totally mislead collectors.

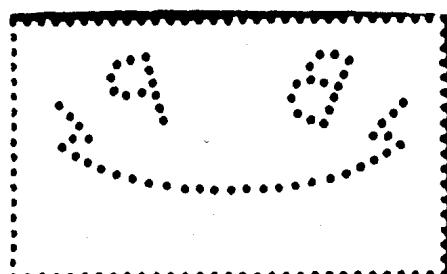
One last item of information which is rather odd. All stamps mentioned to date seem to be mint copies - blocks in particular from Avon Stamps! However, David Andersen from Australia says he has a 4d value, which is used but the postmark is just two wavy lines. He thinks it turned up a few years ago but cannot remember the source. Again that Australian connection.

For members who joined the Society after April 1993 the perfins are again illustrated below. I shall be passing the word to my dealer acquaintances that these are not to be trusted as genuine perfins and it is more than likely they were produced in the 1990's as a speculation.

2½d Value



4d Value



1/3d Value

